THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): There are 62 Cantonments in the country and in all the Cantonments, troops have been stationed according to the operational needs of the Defence Forces, During the year 2008-2009, an expenditure of Rs.44 crore has been incurred on 26 deficit Cantonment Boards as Grants-in-Aid.

Maritime Security Advisory Board

2762. SHRI D. RAJA:
SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has a proposal under consideration to create a Maritime Security Advisory Board for better Coordination of agencies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and what action has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Mechanisms already exist for coordination among various agencies with a view to ensuring maritime security. These are strengthened from time to time depending upon the requirements and security challenges.

Export of rice by private companies

2763. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently rice was exported to some African countries by a private trading company contrary to the Government guidelines regarding Export through Public Sector Units; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) The Government of India notified during 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 export of Non-Basmati Rice to certain African countries through the PSUs - MMTC, STC and PEC. Export to the African countries was done by the PSUs, as evidenced by documents of export, to the buyers in these countries identified by the respective African countries.

Fast interceptor boats for Sagar Prahari Bal

2764. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after Mumbai terrorist attacks, Government had announced that the Navy would get 80 fast interceptor boats for a new specialized force 'Sagar Prahari Bal with 1000 personnel; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what action has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, with a view to strengthening coastal security and surveillance, Government has approved 'Sagar Prahari Bal in the Indian Navy, comprising of 1000 personnel with 80 fast attack crafts. Navy will carry out shallow water

operations by day and night for seaward anti-terrorist patrols for security of naval assets, besides; interception at high speeds and perform search and rescue operations.

Investigation against IAI by Israeli authorities

2765. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government was aware that the Israeli authorities had investigated the Israel Aero Space Industries (IAI) for malpractices in contract with other countries and such charges led to the head of the IAI to stop down in 2005; and

(b) whether his Ministry is also aware that an Indian agent of IAI replaced by another, petitioned the Israeli Defence Ministry claiming that additional commissions were due to him?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): A newspaper article had appeared in the Times of India, New Delhi edition dated 25th January, 2008 captioned 'After Barak, Phalcon deal under cloud', alleging irregularities on the part of Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) in defence contracts including payment of commissions in the procurement of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft by the Indian Air Force.

The matter was taken up with the Israeli Ministry of Defence who had informed that they had no document or report pertaining to the investigation regarding IAI Both the Israeli State Comptroller and the Economic Crimes Department in their State Attorney's Office (in charge of this investigation) had made clear that their investigations focused on alleged IAI procedures and practices without any references or connection whatsoever to the Indian transaction or Indian citizens. Further, the State Comptroller had issued no report on his inquiry and the police investigations ended with no charges being pressed against any person. No other information has been received in this regard.

Tunnel at Rohtang pass in H.P.

†2766. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) when were the tenders were floated to construct a tunnel at Rohtang pass for connecting Kullu to Lahul Spiti in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) whether work on the said tunnel already started, if so, the progress thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when the work will start?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Global tender for construction of the tunnel was issued in November 2007. Technical and commercial bids have been opened and the same are under evaluation.

Establishment of Institute of Defence Design and Technology

†2767. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.